

SALUTE TO "TEACHERS FOR TOMORROW"

Recognition Dinner, The Waldorf-Astoria, New York City, July 1, 1954

Twelve national organizations will join forces to salute our "Teachers for Tomorrow" at a dinner to be held in the Grand Ballroom of The Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City on July 1. Honored guests will be some fifty young people from every state in the union who are currently preparing to enter the teaching profession. Included will be state presidents of several Negro future teacher groups.

The program will dramatize the importance of the teacher in American life, as well as the challenging opportunities awaiting these newcomers. More than 1000 educational leaders from throughout the United States will be present.

Co-sponsors of the salute to "Teachers for Tomorrow" will include these groups whose memberships include more than ten million parents, school board members, teachers, and other citizens:

American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
American Association of School Administrators
Department of Classroom Teachers, National Education Association
National Association of Secretaries of State Teachers Associations
National Citizens Commission for the Public Schools
National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards
National Congress of Parents and Teachers
National Council of Chief State School Officers
National Education Association of the United States
National School Boards Association
National School Public Relations Association
Office of Education, Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

Each future teacher will receive a personally imprinted Salute Portfolio containing letters from more than a score of leaders in American life. A number of these leaders will be present in person to take part in the event. We believe the entire program will give each young teacher-to-be tangible evidence of our deep faith in him and what he and other teachers for tomorrow can accomplish. We believe this kind of heartfelt salute from those already in the profession and from a top group of national leaders will not only convince these future teachers that they have chosen their careers wisely but will encourage promising students in every state to enlist in the ranks of education.

Inspiring letters which point up the importance of the teacher in American life are being received for the Salute Portfolio each day. Those invited to write letters for the portfolio include President Eisenhower, Vice President Nixon, Speaker Martin, Chief Justice Warren, all Cabinet members, several magazine editors, and a number of Pulitzer Prize winners.

The program will be held while 25,000 teachers from the United States and its territories are in New York City for the annual convention of the National Education Association at Madison Square Garden. The Waldorf-Astoria program will be an inspiration not only to the honored young people who are preparing to enter the profession, but also to these thousands of delegates who represent the million teachers in America's classrooms today.

Background Facts about the Teacher Shortage in the United States

Beginning in 1951-52, public school enrollments surpassed the previous peak year of 1933-34 and they have continued to rise steadily at the rate of approximately one million more children a year since the beginning of the present decade. As recently as four years ago, statisticians in the U.S. Office of Education and the Bureau of the Census held forth some hope that the pressure of enrollments would ease in 1960, since there were indications of a slight downward trend in the number of live births between 1948 and 1950. Unfortunately, for these hopes at least, this trend was reversed and in 1952 we reached a new peak of live births in this nation with 3.9 million children born as compared with the 1947 peak of 3.8 million. This means that the hoped-for leveling off of enrollments in 1959-60 will not occur; and, as of that year, our schools will have to accommodate 40 per cent more children than they had to accommodate in 1950-51, or 25 per cent more children than are enrolled in the current school year now drawing to a close.

From this increase in enrollments, a major need arises. We must have more teachers, particularly at the elementary school level, to teach these children. We aren't preparing enough people trained to meet the demand for elementary school teachers needed to cope with the steadily increasing enrollments as well as with a turnover in the teaching profession that runs almost as high as 10 per cent. As a consequence, two makeshifts are employed. A trained teacher is placed in a classroom with not 25 or 30 children, but 35 or 40, and in some cases, even 50 children. Or else, emergency certificates are issued to persons only partially qualified to teach at the elementary level, hoping thereby to spread the load more evenly between the fully qualified teacher and the teacher whose qualifications are under par.

The 1954 survey of teacher supply and demand, recently completed by the National Education Association, reveals that only 867 teachers qualified to teach physics or chemistry will be graduated from all the colleges and universities of the country this June. The potential supply of teachers of any science has dropped 56.3 per cent since 1950.

The report, based on a survey of the 1200 colleges and universities throughout the nation which prepare teachers, is one in a series sponsored each year since 1948.

Other teaching fields hard hit so far as the number of eligible trained teachers is concerned include industrial arts, men's physical and health education, social science, mathematics, and agriculture. The supply of potential teachers of these subjects has dropped more than 50 per cent in four years in each case.

The survey shows that the gap between teachers needed and teachers available at the elementary level is still and will remain critical. To handle new enrollments, and to provide replacements for teachers who die, retire, or leave their posts for other fields, some 85,000 new elementary school teachers are needed. But only 35,000 trained graduates will come from colleges and universities this June to help staff elementary schools.